



SCHENECTADY CITY SCHOOLS

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Schenectady School District Wins National Fine Arts Award

\$10,000 Award Presented to Schenectady at Orlando Conference Today

(SCHENECTADY) –The Schenectady City School District was named the winner of the **national** award presented by the Kennedy Center Education Network (KCAAEN) and National School Board Association (NSBA) on Monday, March 31, 2008. The 20th annual award and \$10,000 prize was presented to Schenectady Board President Jeff Janiszewski and Board Member Lisa Russo before more than 9,000 attendees at the National School Boards Association annual conference in Orlando Florida. Schenectady, selected by a national review panel, was singled out for outstanding support of high-quality arts education. Fine Arts Coordinator Nancy Lussier and John Sayles School of Fine Arts House Principal Peg Normandin also attended the award ceremony in Orlando.

The KCAAEN and NSBA award is presented to one school district in the country each year. Since 1989, the prestigious award has recognized 39 school boards in 24 states for support of arts education. Winning districts demonstrate support for all four artistic disciplines in their arts education program including visual arts, music, theater and dance with instructional programming available for all students in the district.

The Schenectady City School District earned a nomination for the national award after winning the state award from the New York State Alliance for Arts and Education and the New York State School Board Association in November.

Recognized for their ongoing commitment, the Schenectady School Board continues to keep the fine arts program thriving with extraordinary fine arts opportunities and programs for students beginning in pre-kindergarten which are carried on and enhanced each year right through high school.

The school board developed a fine arts sub-committee, chaired by Russo, which supports community partnerships and is dedicated to expanding fine arts opportunities.

- More -

.....A national award winning district

Schenectady High School includes the John Sayles School of Fine Arts (JSSFA), a 42,000 square foot wing of Schenectady High, with a comprehensive fine arts program that attracts tuition-paying students from outside the district. JSSFA includes a black box theatre, dance studio, an art gallery and a state-of-the-art television and video production suite.

The fine arts school offers dance, theatre, visual arts, media and music. JSSFA has its own theatre company, Blue Roses Theatre Company which has performed more than 40 shows in the school's Black Box Theatre. The school is also one of few statewide to offer dance programs. Among the options are jazz, tap, ballet and Afro-Brazilian Dance.

JSSFA also offers Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses in the arts including Studio in Art and Advanced Placement Drawing.

Recent graduates of Schenectady High School have been accepted into exceptionally fine arts programs such as Berklee School of Music and The Tisch School of the Arts at New York University.

The district collaborates with many cultural institutions for residencies, field trips and professional development programs.

The Schenectady City School District's Board of Education has made a commitment to the arts which is a model for arts education throughout the country.

The Kennedy Center Education Department - The Kennedy Center has established one of the most extensive arts education programs in the world – reaching more than 11 million people across the nation each year. Young people, teachers, families, and the general public take part in innovative and effective education programs initiated by the Center, including performances; distance learning and Internet based programs; professional development opportunities; dance, theater and music residencies; courses and classes in the performing arts, and competitions for young actors and musicians. The Kennedy Center's Education Department is committed to promoting higher standards for national performing arts education programs and policy.

Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network - The Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network (KCAAEN) is a coalition of statewide, non-profit organizations working in partnership with the Kennedy Center to support policies, practices, and partnerships to ensure that the arts are a critical and essential part of American education. The KCAAEN is a component of the Kennedy Center Education Department.

National School Board Association – Founded in 1940, NSBA is a not-for-profit federation of associations of school boards across the United States. NSBA represents the nation's 95,000 school board members that govern 14,890 local school districts serving the nation's more than 47 million public school students. Virtually all school board members are elected, the rest are appointed by elected officials.

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